

# INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

## PLAN PROCESS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### *Introduction and Purpose*

The Comprehensive Plan provides a concise statement of goals, general policies, and specific strategies for implementing the town's vision. The plan serves as a general guide for the citizens of Blacksburg, Town Council, the Planning Commission, and Town staff, including development and redevelopment in the town. This directly impacts the future development pattern in the Town of Blacksburg.

While a Neighborhood Master Plan also provides general policies, and specific strategies for implementing the town's vision, its' focus is neighborhood-specific serving as a supplement to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In addition, it functions as a consensus-building tool. Neighborhood citizens can use it as a means to focus efforts within their neighborhood.

### *Plan Process*

The Miller Southside Neighborhood Master Plan was primarily developed by residents within the Miller Southside Neighborhood Planning Area, with assistance from Town staff. The master planning process began in February 2003 at a Town-hosted neighborhood meeting where residents expressed interest in the development of a neighborhood plan.

From August 2003 to August 2004, a citizen task force composed of Neighborhood Representatives drafted the Miller Southside Neighborhood Master Plan. This culminated in a neighborhood meeting in September 2004, to which all neighborhood residents were invited to review and comment on a draft of the plan. In November 2004, Town staff met with the neighborhood task force and reviewed the comments received at the September meeting and began incorporating these comments into the plan.

The Neighborhood Planning Committee (NPC) of the Planning Commission provided general guidance throughout the plan process. The NPC is composed of citizens from diverse backgrounds and interests; including two planning commissioners, one town council member, and one neighborhood representative. The council position also serves on the Planning Commission. The NPC provided general policy guidance, strategies for receiving public input, and ideas for inclusion in the plan through brainstorming, and review and editing of successive drafts.

In December 2004, the Neighborhood Master Plan was presented to the Long Range Planning Committee for review as an amendment request to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Amendment request was subsequently reviewed by the Long Range Committee and public hearings were scheduled for the Planning Commission and Town Council in 2005.

Overall, more than 80 neighborhood residents participated in the development of the Miller Southside Neighborhood Master Plan and many more were made aware of the town's planning activities. This extensive community participation helps to ensure that the resulting document expresses the values and vision that the people of Blacksburg and its neighborhoods have for their town. The process has also raised awareness of planning in the community and laid the groundwork for increased community involvement in the future.

